

Child Assessment

Quality early care and education programs in Rhode Island are on a continuous improvement path that is informed by Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) licensing regulations; Department of Education Basic Education Program (BEP) regulations; BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Standards; and Department of Education Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) Program Standards for Approval. The graphics below illustrate the state's quality continuum for center-based programs, family child care programs, and school-based programs. Larger versions of the graphics can be found in *Appendix A*.

This Tip Sheet describes how programs progress on that continuum in the area of **early childhood assessment**.

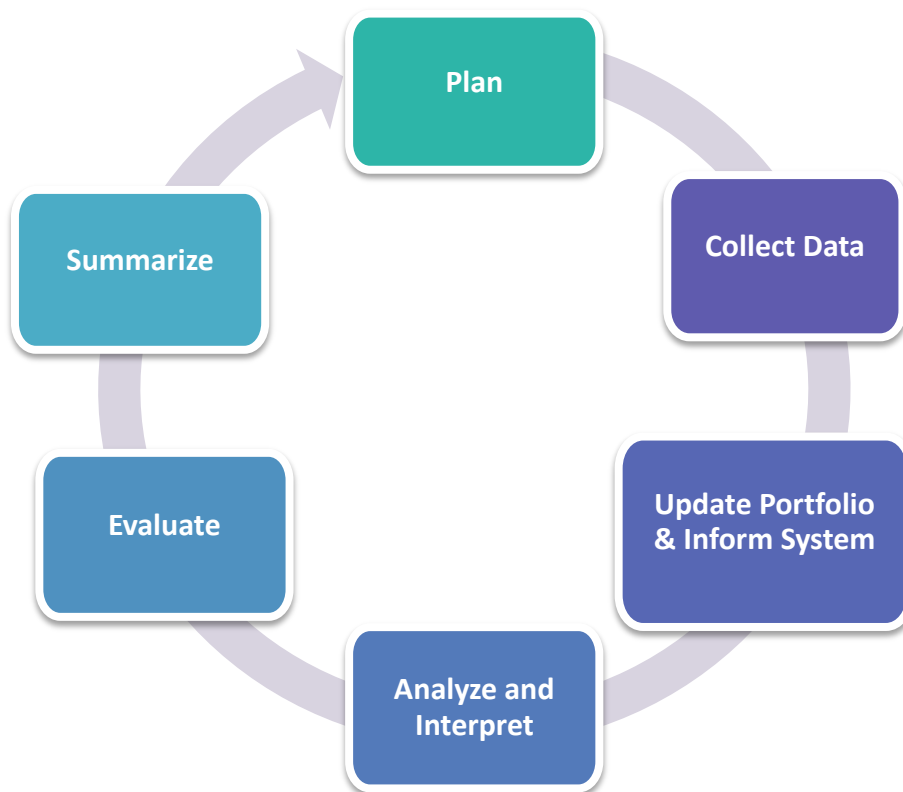


In Rhode Island, **early childhood assessment** is defined as the process of measuring children's learning and development for the purposes of

- monitoring children's development,
- informing curriculum and decision-making,
- identifying whether children may benefit from additional support services, and
- communicating information to others.

At the classroom level, teachers conduct ongoing, authentic assessments of children with the purpose of measuring children's progress toward the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS). Teachers use this assessment information to inform classroom-level decisions about curriculum, the learning environment, and personal interactions. Teachers have a system in place that supports planned, organized, and meaningful data collection, documentation, analysis, and communication. Assessment is also used to create a two-way path of communication between teachers and families, whereby all families are provided the opportunity to contribute to the collection of assessment information, understand the meaning of data collected by the teacher, and use this information to support their child's learning and development.

Classroom-level Assessment Cycle:



At the program level, every child is assessed in an ongoing and authentic way; early childhood assessment data are used by teachers to individualize instruction and by the program to inform policy and professional development decisions; and the purposes, uses, and results of child assessments are communicated clearly to families.

Programs collaborate with health care providers and Child Outreach to ensure that all children regularly receive developmental screenings. In Rhode Island, pediatricians are expected to follow recommended guidelines and conduct standardized developmental screenings for children at 9, 18, and 30 months. For children ages 3 to 5, Child Outreach conducts annual screenings through local education agencies. Programs are responsible for collaborating in this effort and communicating to families the importance of the screening process. If children are found to need additional evaluation and possibly qualify for special services, programs support families in understanding the process and collaborate with evaluation teams and/or specialists in providing useful assessment data to inform decision-making.

Aggregate child assessment data are used at the program level to understand the degree to which the program is attaining desired child outcomes and goals for children, to identify patterns and trends across the program, and to inform the program's continuous quality improvement plan and staff professional

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development. High-quality early education and care programs support pediatrician and Child Outreach goals of screening all children at all recommended ages and use program-level and classroom-level assessment data to ensure that all children will enter kindergarten prepared to be successful.

Programs that want to meet Rhode Island's highest quality standards in the area of early childhood assessment, including programs seeking Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) CECE Program Approval, articulate their approach to child assessment through the development and implementation of a **comprehensive assessment plan** aligned with the RIELDS and their program curriculum. This plan includes policies and procedures that address

- a program's philosophy of assessment;
- the specific purposes for assessment and rationale for the types of assessment tools or methods used;
- the process teachers engage in to collect, document, analyze, and communicate assessment data; and
- the strategies a program employs to support staff and families in understanding and implementing high-quality, valid and reliable, and developmentally-appropriate assessment practices.

The early childhood assessment plan describes how child assessment is implemented at the **classroom level** and the **program level**.



Rhode Island's Quality Continuum as It Relates to Child Assessment

This table describes the increasing level of expectations in the area of early childhood assessment as programs advance on the quality continuum. Evidence of increasing program quality begins with foundational DCYF licensing regulations/BEP requirements, moves progressively up through the BrightStars rating system, and culminates with the highest standards for child assessment articulated in the RIDE CECE Program Standards for Approval.

Regulations or Standards	Level	Progression of Assessment Expectations as Programs Advance through the Quality Continuum	Quality Indicators
BEP Regulations	Program/Classroom	RIDE BEP Regulations (2009), Chapter 13	In development
DCYF Regulations	Program/Classroom	Regulation VIII. G – All children have the opportunity to participate in Child Outreach screening.	Communication during monitoring visits

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Regulations or Standards	Level	Progression of Assessment Expectations as Programs Advance through the Quality Continuum	Quality Indicators
BrightStars Standards	Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-star rating: Families are provided with written information about developmental screenings. 5-star rating: The program collaborates with Child Outreach. 4-star rating: Programs must gather formative assessment information about each child using two methods. 5-star rating: Programs must gather formative assessment information about each child using three methods. 	<p>Assessment must be systematic (all children are assessed, including infants and toddlers) and routine (assessments are ongoing).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4- and 5-star rating: Assessment Outline (developed by the Education Coordinator as a required assignment in RIELDS/RIELS¹ training). A fully developed assessment plan may be submitted in place of an outline. Child Assessment Summary Form
	Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4- and 5-star rating: Programs document how assessment information is used to inform classroom practice. 5-star rating: Programs use valid and reliable assessment tools to inform curriculum planning. 	<p>Assessment evidence documents children's progress and/or development in relation to RIELDS Learning Goal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Assessment Summary Form Onsite document review

¹ Rhode Island Early Learning Standards

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Regulations or Standards	Level	Progression of Assessment Expectations as Programs Advance through the Quality Continuum	Quality Indicators
RIDE CECE Program Standards for Approval	Program	Standards 7.1–7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Child Assessment Plan • Family Handbook • Interview responses (Administrator and Education Coordinator) • Onsite document review
	Classroom	Standards 7.9–7.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Assessment Summary Form • ECERS² scores • CLASS³ scores • Staff interviews (administrator, education coordinator, teacher) • Onsite file and document review

² Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale

³ Classroom Assessment Scoring System

BrightStars and RIDE Application Resources

- Child Assessment Summary Forms (to be completed by programs applying for 2–5 Stars or RIDE CECE as part of the application)

Resources to Extend Your Learning

- Center for Early Learning Professionals InfoLine: www.center-elp.org
- Developmental Screening and Developmental Milestones information specific to Rhode Island at the website for Exceed: Rhode Island’s Early Learning Childhood Commitment: exceed.ri.gov/Pages/Families/FamiliesDefault.aspx
- The Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) professional development courses: *Implementing a Standards-Based Classroom, Implementing a Standards-Based Program*:
www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/EarlyChildhoodEducation/Workforce.aspx#23021-rields-professional-development
- RIDE Comprehensive Assessment System: Best Practices in Early Childhood Assessment:
www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Instruction-and-Assessment-World-Class-Standards/Assessment/CAS/CAS-Appendix-G.pdf
- Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning: Guide to Ongoing Assessment: eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/assessment/ongoing.html
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) Position Statement on “Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation”:
www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/pscape.pdf

APPENDIX A

Center-based Program Quality Continuum



School-based Program Quality Continuum



Family Child Care Program Quality Continuum



APPENDIX B

RIDE Basic Education Plan (BEP) Regulations, June 2009

Chapter 13: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

G-13.3 COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING SYSTEMS

G-13-3.1. Components of a Comprehensive Assessment System. – (a) Each LEA shall develop a comprehensive assessment system that includes measures of student performance for the purposes of formative, interim, and summative evaluations of all students in each core content area. All measurements shall adhere, to the extent possible, to the principles of the National Council on Measurement in Education, while ensuring that assessments are free from bias and that universal design features are embedded in the assessments. All student assessment data shall conform to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

(b) Each comprehensive assessment system shall include the specific strategies used for screening, diagnosing, and monitoring individual students in literacy and numeracy. Systems shall include assessments of sufficient frequency and relevance as needed to ensure that students have access to diverse pathways to support their Individual Learning Plans. These assessments must be coordinated with the evaluation process for determining student eligibility for an Individualized Education Program and for receiving English Language Learner services.

(c) The following components shall be embedded in each comprehensive assessment system:

1. The name or type of assessment (e.g., Stanford 10, teacher developed assessment, observation, comprehensive course assessment for Algebra I);
2. The category of assessment (e.g., formative, interim, summative);
3. The purpose and use of data (e.g., teacher questioning at the end of class to determine instructional next steps, end-of-unit exam to be used as a grade, evaluation from an internship, *Developmental Reading Assessment*, interim assessment to determine student progress and success of reading intervention);
4. The scoring procedures (e.g., teacher scored using rubrics and anchor papers developed by grade-alike or content-alike cross-district teachers, machine scored by publisher) along with the expected turnaround time for providing feedback to students;
5. The implementation schedule (e.g., daily, monthly, twice each quarter, annually); and
6. The allowable accommodations and/or modifications for specific students.

(d) Each LEA in Rhode Island shall have tools and procedures for interpreting and analyzing assessment data for the purposes of student, program, and instructional evaluations. The tools and procedures shall account for the varying levels of use among the education community, from school committee to the individual classroom teacher.

G-13-3.2. Grading and Reporting. – (a) Each LEA shall develop policies and procedures for grading and reporting assessment data at the student, group, school, and district levels. These policies and procedures shall be made accessible to the community. Student grades shall be supplemented with a narrative of student progress on meeting course goals. Student behavior and effort shall be reported separately from academic achievement.

(b) Student level grading shall be based on multiple measures of student work collected in multiple formats (e.g., paper and pencil, oral presentations, projects) and under varying conditions (on demand, timed and untimed, over extended periods, with and without revisions). Student level grading must be based on state or national content standards and be supported by achievement level descriptors written for each grading level.

(c) Student progress and reporting to students and families shall occur on a regular and timely basis. Informal feedback to students, both oral and written, shall occur daily at the elementary school level and at least weekly at the middle and high school levels. Formal reporting with families shall occur within two weeks after the close of a quarter or trimester and immediately if a student is at risk of failing. All reporting policies shall be made public. All reporting of student progress and achievement shall be clear and shall use a variety of formats for communicating (telephone, notes, report cards, conferences, etc.) and, when possible and necessary, multiple languages. Students shall be involved in grading and reporting processes, (e.g., self assessing, participating in parent-teacher conferences, journals).

APPENDIX C

DCYF Child Care Program Regulations for Licensure, November 2013

SECTION THREE – LICENSING STANDARDS VIII. G

VIII. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- G. Staff work collaboratively with local school districts to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate in child outreach screening. Screening is not used to label a child, determine a child's placement in the program, deny a child's entrance into a program or to infer a child's readiness.

APPENDIX D

BrightStars – Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework, November 2013

Domain 5: Early Learning & Development

Standard 8: Child Assessment

The program **connects families to developmental screenings** for their children, and systematically and routinely **gathers information about each**

child in order to meet the individual needs of children and provide differentiated learning experiences.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Licensing Compliance Community-based Programs OR BEP Compliance Public Schools	Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach	Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach	Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach + Child Assessment The program gathers information about each child using 2 or more methods (e.g., child observation, checklist, family surveys/interviews) to inform classroom instruction OR Compliance with Head Start Performance Standards OR NAEYC Accreditation	Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach and collaborates with Child Outreach to provide on-site developmental screenings or provides families with specific dates and locations + Child Assessment The program gathers information about each child using 3 or more methods (e.g., child observation, checklist, family surveys/interviews) to inform classroom instruction OR Compliance with Head Start Performance Standards OR NAEYC Accreditation AND The program uses valid and reliable assessment tools to inform curriculum planning

Domain 5: Early Learning & Development

Standard 6: Child Assessment

The program **connects families to developmental screenings** for their children, and systematically and routinely **gathers information about each child** in order to meet the individual needs of children and provide differentiated learning experiences.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Licensing Compliance	Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach	Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach	Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach + Child Assessment The program gathers information about each child using 2 or more methods (e.g., child observation, checklist, family surveys/interviews) to inform classroom instruction	Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach and collaborates with Child Outreach to provide on-site developmental screenings or provides families with specific dates and locations + Child Assessment The program gathers information about each child using 3 or more methods (e.g., child observation, checklist, family surveys/interviews) to inform classroom instruction AND The program uses valid and reliable assessment tools to inform curriculum planning

BrightStars – School-Age Child Care (K–5) Quality Framework, April 2011

Domain 2: Teaching and Learning

Standard 2: Curriculum, Child Assessment, and Process of Learning

The program uses a program plan, curriculum, or curriculum framework. The program provides many **opportunities for children to learn and practice skills** across a broad range of developmental areas including social,

emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. The program **systematically and routinely gathers information** about each child in order to meet the individual needs of children and provide differentiated learning experiences.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five	Measurement	Resources
School-age program licensing requires a plan book on site which details program planning for at least a month in advance	Curriculum Comprehensive self-assessment (see Standard 8)	Curriculum Comprehensive self-assessment (see Standard 8)	Curriculum The program plan or curriculum includes weekly opportunities for each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active physical activity • creative expression • academic support + Child Assessment The program gathers information about each child through at least one of the following: observations, checklists, interest inventories, family/child surveys or interviews, school performance information, or other assessment tools	Curriculum The program plan or curriculum includes two or more different opportunities weekly for each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active physical activity • creative expression • academic support + Child Assessment The program gathers information about each child through at least two of the following: observations, checklists, interest inventories, family/child surveys or interviews, school performance information, or other assessment tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program plan/ curriculum review • Documentation of child assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA After School Recognition resources

APPENDIX E

RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards for Approval of Preschool and Kindergarten Programs, 2013

Standard Seven: Child Assessment

The program has a written plan and description of practices for implementing a child assessment system aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards for preschool and/or the Common Core State Standards/Grade level Expectations for kindergarten. Assessment data is used to:

- *ascertain the degree to which the program is attaining desired child outcomes and goals for children;*
- *identify patterns and trends across the program; and*
- *inform the program's improvement plan and professional development of staff.*

Program Level

The program has written policies and procedures that guide their child assessment practices at the program and classroom level.

7.1 The program shall have a **written plan and description of practices** for implementing a child assessment system that is aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards and program curriculum for preschool children and/or the Common Core State Standards/Grade Level Expectations and program curriculum for kindergarten. The plan shall include:

- timelines associated with assessments that occur throughout the year;
- procedures to keep individual child records confidential;
- ways to involve families in planning and implementing assessments (see standard 7.4); and
- methods for communicating assessment information with families, including two-way communication.

7.2 The program shall have a **written plan outlining the types of assessment** used by the program and their appropriateness, including:

- monitoring children's development and learning;
- informing curriculum and decision-making;
- identifying children who might benefit from additional or increased supports and/or special services; and
- monitoring program effectiveness.

- 7.3 The **assessment methods** used by the program shall be:
- sensitive to and informed by family culture, experiences, children’s abilities, and home language;
 - meaningful, accurate, and objective; and
 - used in settings familiar to the children.
- 7.4 The program shall have a **written statement in their family handbook** informing families about their child assessment practices that includes information about the assessments used by the program, including:
- purposes for which assessment is used;
 - methods used for assessment;
 - tools used for assessment, and how staff or others are trained to use assessment procedures and interpret results; and
 - how assessment information will be shared with families.
- 7.5 Families shall have ongoing opportunities to share the results of observations from home to **contribute to the assessment process and the identification of goals** for their child.
- 7.6 The program shall make **provisions for teachers, families and relevant specialists to have regular opportunities to participate in two-way communication** to discuss each child’s goals, progress, accomplishments and developmental challenges in the classroom, and at home, as well as to plan learning activities. This includes providing family members with information, either verbally or in writing, about their child’s development and learning on at least a quarterly basis, with written reports at least two times a year as part of the family conferences.
- 7.7 The program shall use **child assessment data at the program level** to:
- ascertain the degree to which the program is attaining desired child outcomes and goals for children;
 - identify patterns and trends across the program; and
 - inform the program’s continuous quality improvement plan as well as the professional development of staff.
- 7.8 The program shall **collaborate with Child Outreach programs** to screen children annually through active collaborations such as providing space for onsite screenings, coordinating onsite community screening events for children and their families in community-based setting and/or providing families with dates and times of upcoming child outreach screenings.

Classroom Level

Classroom level child assessment practices, aligned with the RI Early Learning and Development Standards developmental progressions and/or the Common Core State Standards/Grade Level Expectations, emerge from the written program level assessment plan and are used to:

- **monitor** children's development and learning;
- **inform** curriculum and decision making;
- **determine** who might require additional supports and/or special services; and
- **communicate** early learning and development information with families and other authorized parties.

7.9 Teachers shall use **ongoing, formative assessments** to inform the implementation of classroom practices that reflect each child's developmental level, learning style, and interests in each Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards domain and/or Common Core State Standards/Grade Level Expectations.

7.10 Teachers shall have a **system to help manage and organize** the collection of assessment information for each child.

7.11 Teachers shall assess the developmental progress of each child using assessment data from **natural classroom environments and situations consistent with children's culture, language, developmental abilities and everyday experiences**.

7.12 Teachers shall **use child assessment information** to:

- identify children's strengths, learning styles and developmental levels;
- inform classroom instruction, make sound decisions about individual and group curriculum content, inform teaching approaches, guide personal interactions, and inform the design of the children's learning environment;
- identify children who might benefit from additional or increased supports and/or special services;
- document and implement a plan for each child that supports his or her inclusion and success; and
- share information on each child's progress with families and other authorized parties.

7.13 For children requiring special education services, **early childhood educators and special education providers shall work collaboratively**, and in **partnership with families**, in supporting successful participation in inclusive environments and in ensuring that each partner has access to the necessary information and supports.

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- 7.14 Teachers shall conduct **child assessment as an integral part of the classroom**, so that children are provided with multiple options and varied opportunities for learning and demonstrating what they have learned.
- 7.15 Teachers shall **engage families and relevant specialists in regular two-way communication** to discuss each child's goals, progress, accomplishments and development needs, both in the program and at home.